



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Hector Fontanez School

Public School X103

**4125 Carpenter Avenue
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Farid Reyes

Dates of review: January 14-15, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Nicky Kram Rosen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Hector Fontanez School X103 is an elementary school with 1113 students from Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 55% Black, 39% Hispanic, 2% White, 3% American Indian and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 91%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Educators align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts, and make targeted revisions to support college and career readiness skills for all learners. (1.1)
 - Administrators and teachers utilize multiple curricula resources, including Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) K-5 units of study for English language arts (ELA), Words Their Way, Pearson's K-5 ReadyGen and Common Core-aligned materials, which focus on close reading of complex texts. In addition, they have adopted the GoMath core curriculum, which was selected by the Department of Education (DOE) to provide a CCLS aligned instructional program for elementary schools. Thus, the school ensures that the curriculum reflects the instructional shifts in this core subject area. Each grade-level, year-long pacing guide, reflects a specific genre, text type and purpose, that are addressed in reading and writing to best support the K-5 scope and sequence for social studies and science. Across all grades, units of study clearly demonstrate curricula that reflect that the NYS PK-12 CCLS expectations for reading, writing, speaking and listening and language activities. The school's curriculum maps include the Standards for Mathematical Practice and math domain standards, which incorporate work with fractions, geometry, number sense and measurement that are taught in greater depth from grade to grade, resulting in a school-wide focus geared towards preparing all students with college and career readiness skills.
 - The school's curricula and the student tasks in each unit of study are planned and then refined using student data and work samples. Across each grade, classroom teachers, related service providers, a coach and administrator, regularly work together to identify gaps in students' understanding and share best practices, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and scaffolding strategies. Teachers then plan and/or modify upcoming lessons based on their analysis of students' needs and areas for improvement. This not only elevates the quality of work for all learners, but gives all learners an entry point to perform the CCLS-aligned tasks. Each teacher's lesson plan follows an agreed-upon, school-wide lesson plan template which includes the unit's essential question, academic vocabulary, teacher modeling and student practice using multiple modalities. At the same time, teachers' lesson plans reflect targeted, small group instruction, specific questioning and discussion techniques. Across classrooms consistent structures and similar routines along with clear expectations in each grade allow a diversity of learners to engage in CCLS aligned and rigorous units of study and performance tasks.
- The school gathers and analyzes meaningful sources of data, aligned to curriculum, to identify achievement trends and make instructional decisions in order to improve student outcomes. (2.2)

- Teachers use common assessments and a school-wide rubric aligned to the curricula. For example, across grades student writing portfolios include finished work products, along with earlier drafts that include teacher feedback via the grade-level appropriate, TCRWP Writing Continuum rubric. This rubric is aligned to the CCLS, and specifically addresses the three text types and purpose, as well as classifies what developmentally-appropriate, specific writing traits looks like from grade to grade. All students receive feedback as to their current level of performance, which assists them in understanding what grade-level specific mastery looks like and consider next steps to achieve such. Students understand how they are being evaluated and know how to use the feedback they receive from both teachers and peers to improve their performance towards meeting grade-level specific benchmarks. The school utilizes a variety of tools to measure students' progress throughout the school year. For example, the NYC Performance Based Assessment in writing was administered to all students in grades K-5, in order to determine a baseline for each individual student and identify school-wide patterns, trends and gaps in students' understanding. Across classrooms there are teacher-created systems to track student performance aligned to the CCLS. For example, the kindergarten teachers have created a "Quick Assessment Tracker," which is designed to allow them to capture both observational and quantifiable data during a lesson and then easily and strategically use it to plan their next teaching move toward student mastery. Administrators and teachers use such data to highlight student strengths and weaknesses in each subject and across each grade based upon a pre-determined level of proficiency at different points throughout the year. Teachers use this information to determine how well students are doing in meeting CCLS-aligned benchmarks and examine their planning to inform their next steps in instruction, make adjustments to units of study, lesson plans and student tasks to ensure future lessons are helping all students make continual progress.
- Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure all students understand grade-level specific CCLS-aligned concepts along with supporting skills. Across classrooms teachers utilize prompts and checks for understanding to monitor student performance. They note common student misunderstandings and/or highlight individual student's strengths & weaknesses, thus enabling teachers to make necessary corrections during lessons as well as adjustments when planning and preparing units of study and student tasks. As a result, across classrooms, there has been a positive impact on student outcomes, as evidenced by conversations with teacher teams and observations of classroom and student data across grades.
- Administrative decisions regarding budget, partnerships, and organizational structures support planning and collaborative inquiry towards meeting targeted school instructional goals. (1.3)
 - The administration has strategically organized their human capital as well as financial and material resources to provide both school-wide academic

intervention and social-emotional supports aligned to its' goals to improve instruction. After assessing the needs of its students and the gifts and talents of staff members, the school's administration and teachers identified and created new staff positions to support student challenges and capitalize on teachers' areas of strength and interest. For example, the school has a new dean, whom students clearly identify as the staff liaison for student behavior and management; consequently the assistant principals now spend more time focusing on supervising instruction, supporting teacher practice, collaborating with the school's coaches and assisting with teacher team inquiry. They also collaborate with the dedicated Data Specialist, another new position, to analyze school wide data trends. As a result, students are able to focus more on academic learning while instructional leaders attend to improving teacher practice to increase all student outcomes.

- The school provides additional student services and instructional interventions using targeted resources in conjunction with external partners to support all students in meeting CCLS benchmarks for career and college readiness. For example, the school provides several after school programs; one serves students who did not perform on grade-level on the ELA and math exams and utilizes iReady, an online test preparation curricula, while those students whose beginning of the year diagnostic data showed they need to increase facility with basic skills follow Buckle Down. A Saturday Academy program taught by selected teachers provides an opportunity for additional focused instruction that meets the needs of struggling English language learners (ELLs) using a new program by Rosetta Stone as an instructional intervention. Consequently, students are receiving small group, targeted intervention along with supplemental instructional materials which are matched to their specific learning needs, such as ELLs, so they are able to close gaps in their understanding and improve their performance.
- The school has established a positive culture conducive to learning in a safe, inclusive and responsive environment which supports a diversity of learners working toward academic and social-emotional success. (1.4)
 - The administration and teachers build upon their relationships with external organizations, each other and collaboration with parents to strengthen and support its mission of being caring and community oriented. For example, Asphalt Green (AG) has trained school staff to work collaboratively with them to offer opportunities for students to engage in organized games. The AG team building and school spirit activities along with structured recess time contributes to all students' displaying positive behavior and greater self- efficacy, which has resulted in fewer incidents requiring progressive discipline. Throughout the community all stakeholders show care and communicate mutual respect for one another as demonstrated in conversations with administrators, individual teachers, students and parents; this ensures all students may fulfil their potential alongside meeting external expectations, which their performance is measured against in a safe and respectful environment.

- The school's efforts to address the social and emotional needs of students have resulted in a decrease in suspensions as compared to last year. To date, suspensions have been cut in half along with lower level discipline infractions. To promote parent involvement and engagement, the school sends home monthly calendars and newsletters announcing events and providing information regarding key dates and events along with expectations around student behavior and discipline. Parent workshops and outreach are scheduled on a weekly basis to provide information regarding the increased rigor of the instructional program so that parents can support the school's efforts in preparing students for the demands of the CCLS. In addition, the *Parents as Partners* program invite family members to visit and work with their children during the school day as well as works with Education Through Music (ETM) to provide high-quality, sequential and CCLS-aligned music instruction to support students' academic and personal development. Parents are also offered courses such as English as a second language, the teaching of literacy skills at an early age, and computer classes, which allows them to support their children at home. In collaboration with Learning Leaders, parents are engaged in discussions on topics such as CCLS and college and career readiness to enlist them in motivating their children to think about the road to higher education. As a result, parents shared they feel that they are better equipped to support the administration and teachers' efforts. For example, one parent stated that this has mobilized her to begin researching colleges with her second grader to foster a college bound vision in her child.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop teaching practices to assure that all lessons are suitably challenging and all students' tasks require higher order level thinking and promote student ownership in order to improve student outcomes. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms explicit teaching coupled with strong instructional practices, such as shared and guided reading, the use of manipulatives, small group work and open ended questioning to further student discussions, demonstrate instructional practices that are aligned to the Danielson Framework and the school's belief system that students learn best by strong content delivery and multiple opportunities for practice. For example, students are exposed to teacher led modeling of mathematical strategies, "chunking" as a skill in reading non-fiction text in order to read for information, and citing information in a text to strengthen their claims. However, discussions at the school and team levels are limited in their assessment of the impact that the Danielson framework and the instructional shifts have on instructional practices, lessening the coherence of pedagogical practices from grade to grade.
 - In most classrooms, it was apparent that teachers regularly utilize strategies such as effective student grouping and questioning, leading to effective student discussions that provide all students, including students with disabilities, opportunities to engage in rigorous work. For example,

students have choices in the representation of their work, whether it is oral, pictorial or written. However, lessons showed limited use of high quality extensions to address the needs of higher performing students, thus reducing the school's ability to advance those students to more rigorous tasks that deepen their learning and enhance their work products.

- Build upon teacher observation process with feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and student data, in order to inform targeted professional development to improve professional growth and student learning. (4.1)
 - All administrators' and teacher activities are informed by data linked to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This year they are refining their practice and gaining a deeper understanding of the Framework to pinpoint effective teaching practices. Administrators are conducting several formative and formal observations of classroom teachers. This year one of the assistant principals is incorporating the use of an iPad to capture stills of student work and video student presentations and discussions. Thus, when specific feedback is provided, not only is it in alignment with key school foci; questioning, discussion and assessment, but via this specific use of technology teachers are able to see and hear the same as their supervisor and gain a new ability to analyze, evaluate and discuss their performance and efficacy. However, as a new practice data needs to be collected to determine the efficacy and use of technology as a meaningful professional development tool and lever to improve teacher practice. In addition, school leaders continue to have one-on-one 'data talks' with teachers, including new teachers, to discuss and identify their strengths and needs alongside student data. Together they create individualized action plans to increase their instructional strategy repertoire and develop action plans to self-assess growth and improved performance. Although this structure is in place, it is not the primary driver which strategically informs professional development opportunities to support students' learning needs as well as individual teachers' personal growth. While teachers are provided with clear expectations as well as consistent on-going guidance leading to improved reflection and practice, the lack of consistently connecting areas of teacher growth with the needs of their students, limits opportunities for targeted professional development to improve student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School Name: The Hector Fontanez School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed